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Veterans Health Administration
Boston Healthcare System

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic returns in person

"Today is the second day of the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic at Home event and we are at the Phoenix for adaptive sports," said Jenny Vulpis, a recreation therapist in adaptive sports for the VA Boston Healthcare System.

The National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic provides experiential learning for Veterans recovering from injury or recently diagnosed with a disability. This event offers more than 200 Veterans an opportunity to participate virtually or with hands-on adaptive sports rehabilitation in their neighborhood.

Vulpis said Veterans and staff were unable to be in person for the event last year due to COVID-19 precautions, but this year they were able to do some in-person components throughout the country.

Debra Freed, a Framingham native, was one of the Veterans who attended this year's Summer Sports Clinic, on Sept. 21, at the Phoenix in Boston.

"I did the surfing yesterday, and I'm doing the cooking show this evening," said Freed. "This is really a good workout for chair users. It's safe, it's clean and it's healthy. I'm really grateful to be a part of it."

For Freed, her favorite part of Tuesday's event was being with the group. She participated in the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic's virtual event last year with a buddy. This is the first time she's done this in person and said it's definitely much better.

This year, the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic partnered with the Phoenix to offer an in person adaptive fitness training.

During the event, an instructor from the Phoenix, went through each individual movement, showing how to adapt each exercise if Veteran needed it, said Vulpis, then they did a full 12-minute AMRAP (as many reps as possible). She added, not only are Veterans able to sail, cycle, kayak, and other adaptive fitness events, but they are also able to login and learn about healthy eating, yoga, creative arts, and more.

"This is one of my favorite events because our Veterans get to participate in a lot of these events locally," said Vulpis. "Then, even though it's a clinic, take those skills and add in a travel component, be out in the community, and build camaraderie with other Veterans from around the country."

Veterans interested in getting involved in VA Boston's adaptive sports programs can get a referral from their primary care physician.

More information about the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic can be found at <https://www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/national-veterans-summer-sports-clinic/>.

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Debra Freed, a Framingham, Mass., native, and Air Force Veteran, participates in a locally hosted adaptive sports event as part of the 2021 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic at Home, at the Phoenix in Boston, Sept. 21, 2021. This national event offers more than 200 Veterans an opportunity to participate virtually or with hands-on adaptive sports rehabilitation in their neighborhood. (VA Boston HCS photo by Deirdre Salvas)